<u>CLAIMS</u>

What is claimed is:

1   1.   A method for configuring policies among a plurality of network components
2   equipped with scanners, comprising:
3   (a) receiving an Internet Protocol (IP) address at a particular one of a plurality of
4   network components equipped with a scanner, wherein the same IP address is
5   utilized to configure policies among a plurality of the network components;
6   (b) identifying a portion of the IP address at the particular one of the network
7   components; and
8   (c) determining a policy unique to the particular one of the network components
9   utilizing the identified portion of the IP address.

1   2.   The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the network components include
2   hosts.

1   3.   The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the IP is IPv4.

1   4.   The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the portion of the IP address includes
2   a network part of the IP address.

1   5.   The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the policy dictates which hosts are to
2   be scanned.

1   6.   The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the portion of the IP address includes
2   a predetermined number of bits of the IP address.

1   7.   The method as recited in claim 6, wherein a plurality of the bits are reserved for

2   defining an interface index value.

1   8.   The method as recited in claim 7, and further comprising utilizing the interface

2   index value to identify an interface of the network component to be scanned in

3   accordance with the policy.

1   9.   The method as recited in claim 8, wherein the interface index value is utilized to

2   look up the interface in an index table.

1   10.   The method as recited in claim 6, wherein a plurality of the bits are reserved for

2   defining a subnet selector value.

1   11.   The method as recited in claim 10, wherein the subnet selector value indicates

2   which subnet mask to use.

1   12.   The method as recited in claim 1, and further comprising scanning the particular

2   one of the network components utilizing the determined policy.

1   13.   The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the particular one of the network

2   components is equipped with a scanner adapted to utilizing the policy for

3   scanning purposes.

1   14.   A computer program product for configuring policies among a plurality of

2   network components equipped with scanners, comprising:

3   (a)   computer code for receiving an Internet Protocol (IP) address at a particular one

4   of a plurality of network components equipped with a scanner, wherein the same

5   IP address is utilized to configure policies among a plurality of the network

6   components;

7   (b)   computer code for identifying a portion of the IP address at the particular one of

8   the network components; and

9   (c)   computer code for determining a policy unique to the particular one of the

10   network components utilizing the identified portion of the IP address.

1   15.   The computer program product as recited in claim 14, wherein the network

2   components include hosts.

1   16.   The computer program product as recited in claim 14, wherein the IP is IPv4.

1   17.   The computer program product as recited in claim 14, wherein the portion of the

2   IP address includes a network part of the IP address.

1   18.   The computer program product as recited in claim 14, wherein the policy

2   dictates which hosts are to be scanned.

1   19.   The computer program product as recited in claim 14 wherein the portion of the

2   IP address includes a predetermined number of bits of the IP address.

1   20.   The computer program product as recited in claim 19, wherein a plurality of the

2   bits are reserved for defining an interface index value.

1   21.   The computer program product as recited in claim 20, and further comprising

2   computer code for utilizing the interface index value to identify an interface of

3   the network component to be scanned in accordance with the policy.

1   22.   The computer program product as recited in claim 21, wherein the interface

2   index value is utilized to look up the interface in an index table.

1   23.   The computer program product as recited in claim 19, wherein a plurality of the

2   bits are reserved for defining a subnet selector value.

1   24.   The computer program product as recited in claim 23, wherein the subnet

2   selector value indicates which subnet mask to use.

1   25.   The computer program product as recited in claim 14, and further comprising

2   computer code for scanning the particular one of the network components

3   utilizing the determined policy.

1   26.   The computer program product as recited in claim 14, wherein the particular one

2   of the network components is equipped with a scanner adapted to utilizing the

3   policy for scanning purposes.

1   27.   A system for configuring policies among a plurality of network components

2   equipped with scanners, comprising:

3   (a)   logic for receiving an Internet Protocol (IP) address at a particular one of a

4   plurality of network components equipped with a scanner, wherein the same IP

5   address is utilized to configure policies among a plurality of the network

6   components;

7   (b)   logic for identifying a portion of the IP address at the particular one of the

8   network components; and

9   (c)   logic for determining a policy unique to the particular one of the network

10   components utilizing the identified portion of the IP address.

1 28. A method for generating an Internet Protocol (IP) address for configuring a

2   policy among a plurality of network components equipped with scanners,

3   comprising:

4 (a) generating an IP address;

5 (b) transmitting the IP address to a plurality of network components each equipped

6   with a scanner;

7 (c) wherein the network components are each capable of identifying a portion of the

8   IP address, and determining a policy unique to the network component utilizing

9   the identified portion of the IP address.

1 29. An Internet Protocol (IP) address data structure for configuring a policy among a

2   plurality of network components equipped with scanners, comprising:

3 (a) an interface object for identifying an interface to be scanned in accordance with

4   a policy; and

5 (b) a subnetwork object for identifying a mask to use in determining a subnetwork

6   to be scanned in accordance with the policy.

1 30. A method for embedding information in an Internet Protocol (IP) address for

2   scanning purposes, comprising:

3 (a) embedding information in an IP address; and

4 (b) sending the IP address to a plurality of network components;

5 (c) wherein the information is capable of being used by a scanner for scanning

6   purposes.

1 31. A computer program product for embedding information in an Internet Protocol

2   (IP) address for scanning purposes, comprising:

3 (a) computer code for embedding information in an IP address; and

4 (b) computer code for sending the IP address to a plurality of network components;

5   (c)   wherein the information is capable of being used by a scanner for scanning

6   purposes.